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Claremont McKenna College

Jose P. Laurel and Jorge B. Vargas: Issues of Collaboration and Loyalty during the Japanese Occupation of the Philippines

Submitted To

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And

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By

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For

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Chapter I. Introduction

Before the war broke out, the Philippines were under the American government and under supposedly good intentions in aiding the Philippines in its true path to independence. The Americans already established bases for their own fleet and army and settled down in the country, spreading education and trade ideas to the natives. Eventually war with the Japanese broke out, particularly during the Japanese's traitorous attack on Pearl Harbor despite the ongoing peace talks between the American and Japanese government. It was a blatant attack that triggered the American attack against the Axis Powers during the Second World War. The Japanese were trying to form an empire in Asia in which they would be reigning over the main target colonies of the countries fighting against the Axis powers, one being the Philippines. The Japanese occupation in the Philippines officially started with the establishment of the Japanese Imperial forces in Manila, headed by Lt. Gen. Masaharu Homma, the commander-in-chief of the Japanese Imperial forces in the Philippines, on January 3, 1942. During the time of the occupation, everything was placed under Japanese rule, from the industrial establishments, factories, banks, schools, churches and theatres. Jose P. Laurel and Jorge Vargas, two men working under President Manuel Quezon at the time, and other members of his cabinet and staff, were asked to stay in the country as Quezon was to be in the United States as ordered by U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt for the continuity of his presidency, albeit in exile abroad. Hence, being flown abroad, the cabinet members who were left, including Vargas and Laurel, were the ones to act as head of state in the country as the war begun. These people who were trapped by the Japanese had to organize and form a commission so that the government of the Philippines would be able to be represented when the Japanese arrived. The said commission was composed

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¹ Hartendorp, A. V. H. *The Japanese Occupation of the Philippines.* (Manila, 1967.), 198

of Mayor Jorge Vargas, Benigno Aquino, Antonio de las Alas, Jose P. Laurel, Rafael Alunan, Claro. M. Recto and Quintin Paredes while Jose Yulo was chosen as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. The issue presented here is that the Executive Commission, specifically Jorge B. Vargas and Jose P. Laurel one who acted as head of state and the latter tagged as President, were not collaborators with the Japanese nor did they agree on the atrocities done by the Japanese invaders. The government, or commission, was fully shadowed by the Japanese Imperial Army, thus blinding the citizens into thinking that the government itself is betraying its own people by serving the wants and pleas of the Japanese. Vargas and Laurel did not, by their own free will, accept the occupation of the Japanese and its power of the country; they made decisions that were for the greater good of the citizens and not only for the safety of a chosen few. It was a mock collaboration, so to speak, to keep the Japanese from venting their anger to the innocent citizens. The significance in the issue is that Vargas and Laurel as well as the commission have been erroneously portrayed by historians as traitors and collaborators during these times. What they missed in accusing them is the real-time experience that Vargas and Laurel had in face of the horrific actions of the Japanese to the people. The Executive Commission was ready to obey the orders of the Japanese Army for the "maintenance of peace and order and the promotion of well-being of our people"². From this, it is inferable that the government was trying to protect the people and not to sell them out to the invaders. People should be able to see that the Commission, Vargas and Laurel, only wanted to lighten the blow that could wound all citizens and thus make him a patriot for having the foresight to shield the people from danger, torture and even, death. However, during the time that they were pretending to be collaborators with the Japanese, a desire to exercise their new found powers took hold in Laurel and Vargas. For

² Hartendorp, A. V. H. *The Japanese Occupation of the Philippines*. (Manila, 1967.),145

Laurel, when he became president of the Japanese funded government, he decided to try and alter the constitution of the Philippines as well as the people of his country to Japanese standards. He also declared martial law in the Philippines thus condoning the martial law set by the Japanese prior their arrival as well as the atrocious actions that came after. Unfortunately he was also forced to sign a declaration of war against the United States which ultimately tagged him as a collaborator and traitor. This would have been considered normal behavior for a patriot such as Laurel had it not been for the fact that most of his intentions were based off the Japanese ideal of how a country should be run. Vargas on the other hand took this opportunity to live his dream of becoming the president of the Philippines even if he really wasn't. When placed next to Laurel Vargas is seen as more of a collaborator since he was there at the time that the Japanese landed. Initially while Vargas thwarted the Japanese attempts to take complete control of the Philippines he eventually took certain actions that could be seen as collaborating such as advocating some of the fiscal and economic decisions that the Japanese made to benefit himself, the various meetings that he had with the leaders of the Japanese army in which he complied with their stated actions and allowing the Japanese to spread their ideology to the Philippines causing many of the people, his cabinet as well as himself to become intrigued with Japanese ideas.

This is argumentative for the fact that people who do not have full knowledge of what was going on during these times are besmirching the very nature of Filipinos that were in charge during that time. Even more so, besmirching the head representatives of their country as "traitorous" or as a "betrayer" was going a step further than was necessary. The Filipinos themselves should be cleared of this fiction since what Vargas and Laurel intended to do was for the country and not for the Japanese. When the Japanese came in 1941, collaboration with them would not have been so universally stigmatized had they treated Filipinos kindly. But by April

1942, only four months into the Occupation, the horrors of the Bataan Death March had already afflicted the national consciousness. The Filipinos who collaborated with them were marked. Some were assassinated by the guerrillas. But on the whole, many survived not just the stigma; they were appreciated, some were regarded as heroes, and many of them prospered. The election of Jose P. Laurel, the puppet president of the Japanese, to the Senate and of other collaborators and the amnesty granted them by President Quirino shortly after the country gained independence from the United States in 1946 resolved politically the collaboration issue. As a moral problem, however, it confuses the mind to this very day. Collaboration gnawed at the very heart of a nation; it was the ultimate treason because it sought justification not so much in its defense of survival, but because it was committed in the name of that nation itself. It also brings into question the idea of loyalty to ones nation and those who would support that nation. On e of the main reasons that Laurel and Vargas were tagged as traitors and collaborators was because they were seen as not being loyal to the people of the Philippines and the United States. Ironically, many of their actions that seemed to be collaborative in nature were done for the exact opposite reason. Before I go into the complexities of the actions carries out by Jorge Vargas and Jose P. Laurel during the war; I would first like to delve in to the mind of the man who was said to be responsible for participating in one of the darkest periods in Philippine history. I will first explore the ideals and values that helped to shape the train of thought that would help to explain the reasons that Laurel made the decisions he made during the Japanese occupation. The first reason being that he was a very charismatic man.

Chapter II. Jose P. Laurel

Pre-War Beliefs

LAW

During the occupation Laurel used much of what he knew as being a lawyer in to make decisions when considering how the Japanese would have reacted. However, he also believed that the law created by man was not being used successfully especially by the figures in the Philippine government. So when Laurel became president he sought out to make thing right. Law, to Laurel, was the cement of society, by which authority could be maintained and order could be preserved. The observance of law, therefore, was the positive force of social life which could not be abandoned even during a period of military occupation. In his early years Laurel went to the United States in order to study the law in terms of the US: "...he admired American democratic institutions..." This led Laurel to seek out the respect of law and order not only because he became com-mitted to the success of his own regime, which required popular compliance, but also because the observance of law was an essential, universal constant, without which, he believed, society soon collapsed. He thought very highly of the laws used by the US to the point of how he even praised how the laws are created, "...he held an apprenticeship in how laws were codified, how legal researches were conducted and how ideas were arranged and compressed into lucid, expressive clauses." He believed that the law would bring about a properly governed and structured Philippines in order to put them on the modern global stage. These views on what the country could be played into how Laurel acted when the Japanese landed in the Philippines; he simply saw this as a way to carry the islands of the Philippines into

³ Castillo, Teofilo del. *The Saga of Jose P. Laurel.* (Manila & Delaware: Associated Authors Company, 1949.),106

⁴ Ibid.,69

a new era in which they could finally be independent of any other forces. More importantly it would be a republic that would be run by his ideals rather than someone who was not as qualified as he believed he was to run it.

Laurels views on the law even permeated his thoughts on how he thought the current Commonwealth government should be run. In fact there are many anecdotes in which Laurel seemingly criticizes the political agenda of the former president Manuel Quezon. Laurel lived most of his adult political life in the shadow of Manuel Quezon, who he saw as a semi-dictator, but someone who loved to create and observe the dissonance and excitement of Philippine politics. Quezon encouraged the problems between different politicians as well as unilateral parties, a practice which Laurel viewed as wasteful and unproductive. This however meant nothing since Laurel was the type of man who often stood in the background when it came to political affairs. In fact, months before Pearl Harbor, Laurel is quoted, in defending his support of emergency powers for Ouezon, to have said that "constitutional dictatorship" was in keeping with a worldwide trend in which "totalitarianism [is] gradually supplanting democracy." Even though complete control over the government without any checks or balances was against what Laurel himself believed in. Therefore it is no surprise that when the Japanese landed he was known for praising the "constitutional and benevolent dictatorship in Japan," and during the war he wrote: In the interrelationship of powers of government a center of political gravity must, in the nature of things, be provided. Such a center must necessarily be the Executive.... The

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⁵ Castillo, Teofilo del. *The Saga of Jose P. Laurel.* (Manila & Delaware: Associated Authors Company, 1949.), 58

⁶ Ibid., 58

⁷ Jorge B. Vargas, "Report of the Chairman of the Philippine Executive Commission to the Commander-in-Chief, covering the period January 23, I942, to March 3 I, 1943," unpubl. document of August 23, I943, pp. 40-4I.)

unification of responsibility as a result of the relative centralization of authority in the conduct of state affairs during a critical period is one of the predominating principles of the new constitution."8These scenarios indicate that Laurel was only interested in his views of the law and the thought of the incoming Japanese raised in his mind that maybe now things could start changing for the better. His view on the law was so radical that later on as president, Laurel began to alter the constitution as well as the laws that were in place by the former President Quezon to fit his own image of what he thought they should based off the principles that he believed in. He would later initiate a plan to make the entire Philippines a place that upheld the best lawful policies that the others countries currently had.⁹

According to Laurel, "Law is that which differentiates between good and evil between just and unjust. It is law which safeguards honor, lives, liberties, and estates." Laurel believed that the law was the final word in whatever happened in the world. So when the Japanese landed in the Philippines it is more than likely that Laurel believed that international Law, the law of the Philippines and the laws established by the Japanese had to be followed due to his strong belief in the law. When the Japanese first landed in the Philippines (in 1941) they established martial law onto all of the citizens. It was Laurel and the commission's idea that the people of the Philippines should follow that law instead of their natural reaction to fight back. Laurel would later explain this was in order to prevent any harm from befalling any of the Filipino people. Laurels strict idea of following the law can best be explained from Laurels stance as a Christian man. Due to his strong religious background and religious morals when Laurel began

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⁸ Manuel E. Buenefe, War-time Philippines (Manila, I950), p. 203

⁹ Collas, J. Man of Destiny.(Manila: J.Collas, 1945.), 47

¹⁰ Laurel, Jose P. *Bread And Freedom.* (Manila: Advocate Book Supply Co., 1953.), 29

to learn about the law he developed a strong sense of justice as to what was right and what was wrong.

Religion and Morals

With the arrival of the Spanish on the sixteenth and seventeenth century's one of the main things that they brought with them were Roman Catholic missionaries. The values and morals that were derived from this religion played a major role in how Laurel interacted with people but more importantly how he applied them to how he perceived the law and how the government should be ran. Because of Laurels strong faith in good many of the decisions that he made for the people were based off a spiritual text or moral saying many of which allowed the Japanese to have their way. The key evidence of this can be seen in his key speech *For God & Country* in which he starts off by declaring that he believes in God, in order to support his devoutness as a Christian man. He continues by quoting a bible chapter Romans 13:1 which states:

"Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God."

During the first months that the Japanese were occupying the Philippines there was no formal amount of resistance by the Philippine government or the general population towards the invaders. When Laurel speaks of their arrival, many of the things that he talks about are the ways that the government tried to appease and communicate with the Japanese officials whether it was by sending a representative, forming a Japanese style government at the generals of the country that had been bombing them. The point is that Laurel believed that whatever

¹¹ Kanagae, Seitaro. *The Path To Friendship: A Tale of A Japanese Immigrant in The Philippines.* (Tokyo: Keiso Shobo, 1987.), 146

¹² Laurel, Jose P. War Memoirs. (Manila: Jose P. Laurel Memorial Foundation, 1962),6-7

power was more dominant at the time must have clearly been the will of God. This has the implication that Laurel and the others decided to collaborate with the Japanese because of Laurels belief in a higher power that lead to their occupation. After the Japanese landed in the Philippines and declared martial law many of the Philippine people felt the heavy hand of Japanese oppression. This consisted of many atrocities being afflicted against the Filipinos such a slapping for not bowing or jewelry and money theft. The religious and moral beliefs of Laurel explains why at a certain point the government officials of the Philippine government convened and decided to collaborate with the Japanese rather than witnessing their people suffer the same as they have so many years before with previous invaders.

Laurel also mentions that he believed in treating his fellow man with dignity respect. In his speech he writes: "I am a Christian and as such should hold that every man is man's brother and equal." ¹³Laurel believed that the Japanese followed this rule as well as he did. Plus given that the bible also says to do onto others it only seems appropriate that the Japanese would treat the People of the Philippines the same way he would them and the only way to do that would be to begin collaboration talks with the Japanese. Normally when another force was occupying a country there would be resistance to the conquering force, but in this case it only led to the harm of the Filipino people. So it is concise to say that Laurel wanted to do things differently this time. He wanted to make sure that they did not make that same mistake again or that history would not repeat itself. With this knowledge he and the remainder of the Philippine government set out to have peace talks with the heads of the Japanese in the Philippines. This is primarily when the act of collaboration by many of the elites in Filipino society began.

¹³ Kanagae, Seitaro. The Path To Friendship: A Tale of A Japanese Immigrant in The Philippines. (Tokyo: Keiso Shobo, 1987.), 146

Laurels strong sense of moral values backed by his Christian beliefs revealed to him a way to decrease the burden and tensions of the Japanese forces on the Filipino people as well as preserving the commonwealth of the Philippines at the same time. In fact this was his ultimate goal as instructed by the then exiled President Quezon and for Laurel there was nothing more important to him than doing whatever was necessary for his country.

Nationalism/Patriotism

Laurels love for his country allowed him to mainly think about the well-being of the Filipino people when making decisions. This caused Laurel to bend over backwards by letting the Japanese have their way in order to lessen the blow that the occupation was having for people. When the Japanese landed in the Philippines and it seemed that the U.S. forces were at the losing end of their attack, General McArthur suggested to President Quezon to escape with him to a secure bunker in Corregidor. More or less Quezon commanded Laurel and the rest of the Commonwealth to stay and defend the country "You must remain at your posts to carry on the work and to protect the people" After that moment it became clear for Laurel that he had to do everything within his power to keep the country alive and going towards it ultimate goal of Filipino independence. Laurel took this mandate seriously as he staked his life to prevent the enemy command from conscripting the Filipino youth into the Japanese Army and protect the people from the atrocities of the occupying Japanese army.

Before his presidency of the puppet government, Laurel was an achiever in many fields, as legislator, jurist, writer and administrator in the pre-war struggle for independence. Politically, he was a nationalist Nationalist (or Nacionalista). Professionally, he rose from mere clerk to

¹⁴ Castillo, Teofilo del. *The Saga of Jose P. Laurel.* (Manila & Delaware: Associated Authors Company, 1949.), 11

Secretary of the Interior in 1923, at age 31. He was elected Senator of the Fifth District in 1925 and served as a delegate to the Constitutional Convention in 1934, where he was nominated Presiding Officer. ¹⁵ In 1936 he was appointed Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, and was sworn in as Chief Justice of the Commonwealth President Manuel Quezon in 1941. In his service during the war, Laurel eloquently maintained that: "...forced collaboration is not collaboration and voluntary collaboration as a means of national survival should not be taken as treason." ¹⁶ Laurels quick rise through the Filipino government is proof that he cared greatly for his nation. Though mostly standing in the background in the political stage Laurel had many ideas that he felt were necessary to further the Filipino people into a new age. However during the occupation of the Japanese Laurels main goal as Filipino Nationalist was to limit the damage that was being done to his people. Many of the Filipino people were imprisoned or interned mostly for forgetting to abide by the laws and cultural standards met by the Japanese. So when the Commonwealth government finally agreed to collaborate with the Japanese one of the conditions set by Laurel was the release of these people from the prisons and the camps as well as more leniencies towards the citizens of the Philippines. A few years later when Laurel took up the presidency of the puppet government he would also prevent the conscription of the many of the Filipino men into the Japanese army. Laurels primary idea of made a nation great was not the way it was run or even it being independent; it was the people. He showed his national patriotism during the war by doing everything he could to protect the Philippines greatest asset which were the people of the Philippines and that is what made him a true patriot to the Filipino independent cause.

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¹⁵ Pastrana, Vincente. *President Jose P. Laurel: (The Hero for Our Epic Struggle).* (2001.), 15

¹⁶ Agoncillo, Teodoro A. *The Burden of Proof: The Vargas and Laurel Collaboration Case.* Mandaluyong: University of the Philippines Press for the U.P.-Jorge B. Vargas Filipina Research Center, 1984., 132

Laurel was genuinely a devout nationalist for whom modern colonialism was an abomination. Frequently he spoke out against the American colonial legacy. "We are weary;" he said during the war, "with the pretensions of the 'White man's burden,' which more often than not has only served to cloak exploitations of weaker peoples." He reasoned that "if the Americans are no longer here and we are earnest in our desire for independence, we should not want them back." Laurels dislike of the former American regime made him a perfect candidate as a leader for the new Japanese government. However it should be noted that Laurel still admired the ideals that were established by the American forefathers, just not the current people and their imperial policies. Surprisingly he felt the same way about the Japanese when they arrived in the Philippines.

Japanese Influence

Before the war Laurel was well acquainted with the Jpanese and actually had ties with many Japanese officials. Therefore it is no wonder that he didn't completely mind that they were occupying as he agreed with many of their ideals. Laurel was constantly commenting on how he was disappointed at how the Filipino people were living, which he viewed as both "wasteful and deleterious." He was not content with some of the traits of his own culture, which he felt lacked discipline, control and purpose. He was drawn in by the by features of the Japanese societal structure which he felt would have had a positive effect on Philippine life if they could only be transferred to the Filipino people.

Laurel believed that the integrity and compactness of the Japanese family was a source of communal strength because of the ever present authority and responsibility of the heads of

¹⁷ Manila Tribune, November 10, 1943, 6

¹⁸ Castillo, Teofilo del. *The Saga of Jose P. Laurel.* (Manila & Delaware: Associated Authors Company, 1949), 78

families. The following discipline gave rise to the patriarchal system, but with a political concept happily conceived regarding the divinity of the Emperor as the supreme patriarch of the nation. It made them a strong and cohesive people ever united to move and to act, to fight and to die at the request of their Emperor. Japan had succeeded in cementing the lasting foundations of her national existence through the family system which is one of the secrets of her almost incredible spiritual strength and power. 19 Laurel admired the way that Japan's society was free of individualistic goals, in which profits seemed to be re-invested in the state rather than drawn off for individual luxuries. He admired the seeming domestic tranquility, in which all classes appeared to accept willingly their respective places in the social order, and he admired the way the Japanese system of education focused on service to the state. The controlled system implied by the enforced education of the masses may give a Filipino observer the impression that the system is undemocratic. Laurel believed that the truth, however, was that in education what is needed is not democracy... but regimentation, not liberty, but discipline, not liberalism but correct orientation, not flexibility but rigidity in the formation of the desired mould of citizenship.²⁰ He spoke of the importance of "racial pride in shaping the destiny of a nation," and, along with many other Asians in the pre-war period, admired the apparent benefits which the Japanese derived from their identity. ²¹

Laurel was also greatly impressed with the achievements of Japanese frugality, hard work and sacrifice, virtues he found sorely lacking in the Filipino personality. To the Japanese throughout the ages, no sacrifice was too great if it was made, in the words of the Imperial

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¹⁹ Laurel, Jose P. *Forces That Make A Nation Great.* Manila: Manila: Bureau of Printing, 1943, 83

²⁰ Laurel, Jose P. Forces That Make A Nation Great. Manila: Manila: Bureau of Printing, 1943,91

²¹ David J. Steinberg, "The Philippines During World War II: A Study in Political Collaboration," unpublished. (Harvard University, 1964).

Prescript on Education to "advance public good and promote common interests." In Japan they have a saying, "Life is nothing, duty is everything." and out of that final moral concept has stemmed the might and solidarity of the great Nippon Empire. ²² Laurel was also known for being a puritan, demanding of himself rigid physical and mental standards; but being born into what he must have viewed as a lazy and corrupt society, he marveled, often mistakenly, at a seemingly more efficient example of society elsewhere. His puritanical disposition is reflected in the chapter titles of Forces that Make a Nation Great: "Honor," "Frugality and Cleanliness," "Self-Reliance and Perseverance," "Man Perfects himself by Working," "The Value of Ethical Principles," and "Truth, the Mother of All Virtues." Laurel was fascinated by the role of the Emperor as a symbol for the Japanese. Like many others in the pre-war period, he attributed much of Japan's success in industrialization to the impact of this symbol upon the lives of the Japanese people, and he wrote that "the Philippines are in need of a symbol possessed of similar compelling force and dynamic reality."²³He believed that the presidency of the Philippines should be elevated to fulfill this function. But more than a mere symbol, Laurel saw it as the single vehicle for imposing the needed reforms. He wrote, "Shall we return to the system of popular elections and create a temporary ruling aristocracy, or at the worst, a ruling clique of mediocre 'intellectuals' in whose hands we would entrust the destiny of the nation?" Laurel wanted the answer to be "no" but being a man who mostly operated in the background when it came to politics there was not much he could do. Also seeing that his colleague Jorge Vargas was in charge of the government at the time of the Japanese occupation he could not do much save follow Vargas' commands (in this case the will of exiled president Quezon). Nevertheless the arrival of the Japanese came as a relief to Laurel as it would have signaled a turning point in

²² Laurel, Jose P. Forces That Make A Nation Great. (Manila: Manila: Bureau of Printing, 1943), 16

²³lbid, 75

the history of the Philippines that would bring them towards the independence that they so fought for since the Spanish invaded.

Laurel's Presidency / Changed Views of the Japanese

Before the occupation of the Japanese army in the Philippines, Jose P. Laurel had a relatively positive relationship with the Japanese. So when the Japanese came, Laurels initial thought was that it would not be as bad as predicted. Even more so it would be a chance for the Filipino people to finally declare and claim their independence Laurels exploits with the Japanese can be traced back to before the war in which Laurel had a greater respect for the Japanese. His admiration was so great that he even allowed his son to attend the military academy in Japan even though he received his education in the United States. As mentioned before he even believed that the Japanese way of life was one of the greatest things that could have emerged out of that country and even made it part of his ideology to make the Filipino man the perfect citizen to serve the state. It is specifically for these reasons that the Japanese decided to make Laurel the president of the Japan formed Philippine government. However, during his presidency Laurel would come to learn that there was a hidden agenda behind every order that he and his cabinet carried out on behalf of the Japanese.

Pro-Japanese speeches

One of the things that Laurel had to do as the new President of the Japanese puppet government was give out announcements and speeches. One of the main concerns of the Japanese occupational forces was the guerilla armies that were still hanging around and making the occupation difficult. They tried a new approach by forcing Laurel and his cabinet to plea with the people of the Philippines to give up their fight and go along with their war agenda. This can mostly be seen in his inauguration speech when he states:

"From the crucible of a world in turmoil was unleashed the mighty force that was to spell the liberation of the Asiatic people from foreign domination. Today, as we witness the triumphal realization of or national ideal, we would be sadly wanting in those magnanimous qualities which distinguish a noble and valiant race, if we did not forgive the wounds and havoc inflicted by that war, the immolation of our youth with their golden promise of the future, the untold sufferings and privations undergone by our innocent population. This is no time for indulging in unseemly recriminations or for ventilating our grievances. In all dignity and out of the fullness of our hearts we could do no less than acknowledge before the world our debt of honor to the August Virtue of His Majesty, the Emperor of Nippon, for ordaining the holy war and hastening the day of our national deliverance."²⁴

This excerpt proves itself as an example of what the Japanese wanted form the Filipino people as well as Laurel. Laurel actually adds that the Japanese allowed them to receive what they wanted all along which was national independence and that they need to forget the atrocities that were done to them in the initial stages of the war. This was critically important to Laurel since he wanted to reduce the damage that was being done to his people. The promise by the Japanese of a more restrained stay in the Philippines was one of the prime reasons that Laurel accepted the role of president of the Japanese puppet government. He believed that they would keep to their word and limit the number of incidences that would happen between the Japanese soldiers and the Filipino citizens.

In order to further convince the citizens Laurel also had to convince the citizens over to the Japanese way of thinking in terms of why the war was being fought as well as explaining their occupation of the Philippines. In his speech he explains the reasons for the sudden influx of Asian people in the Philippines Laurel had to further explain the entire ideal of the Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere to the his fellow countrymen so that they could understand what was going on in their country. He even goes as far as to make a proclamation on behalf of the Filipino people:

²⁴ <u>The Phillipine Presidency Project.</u> 12 November 2009. 12 October 2010 http://filipinopresidency.multiply.com/journal/item/37.

"...In the name of the Filipino people I wish to convey the honored guests our sincere assurance of goodwill, and to express the fervent hope that the fraternal ties which unite our people to theirs will grow even stronger and firmer in the years to come."²⁵

In this instance Laurel is using his status level in order to smooth things over between the Filipinos and the Japanese so that he can live up to the ex-presidents expectations as well as his own. Unfortunately, it was an expectation that Laurel was failing to achieve. As mentioned by a Japanese friend of Laurels the Filipino people did not agree with the ideology incorporated into Laurels inaugural speech." They realized it was but a devious strategy by the Japanese army." The Filipino could not have been more right as the Japanese would go back on many of their promises much to Laurels surprise.

Presidential Limits

While President, Laurel seized every opportunity to strengthen his concept of the office. Almost immediately after assuming office, he got an appointed legislature to pass Act 39 which declared a state of emergency and authorized the "President of the Republic of the Philippines to promulgate rules and regulations to safeguard the safety, health, and tranquility of the inhabitants of the Philippines." Laurel made maximum use of the powers granted him by the 1943 Constitution and this legislative act to dominate all governmental activity. In a series of bureaucratic reorganizations, he personally assumed the portfolios of the Interior and the Economic and Education Ministries, thereby holding direct executive control of the most critical agencies of his government. As President of the Japanese sponsored mass political party, the Kalibapi, he supervised the activity of the only legitimate political organization permitted by the

²⁵ Castillo, Teofilo del. *The Saga of Jose P. Laurel.* (Manila & Delaware: Associated Authors Company, 1949), 165

²⁶ Kanagae, Seitaro. *The Path To Friendship: A Tale of A Japanese Immigrant in The Philippines.* (Tokyo: Keiso Shobo, 1987.),142

²⁷ Official Gazette, I, No. 5 (February, 1944), 492-494.

Japanese. Indeed, he was ubiquitous. Virtually every governmental agency felt his driving force. His political aims can perhaps be most clearly observed in the structure of the 1943 Constitution, in which Laurel's own views predominated. From his hospital bed he accepted the position of President of the Preparatory Commission for Philippine Independence, the PCPI; and as self appointed Chairman of the Drafting Committee, he determined the language and content of the Constitution within the limitations imposed by the Japanese Military Administration and Tokyo authorities.

As he became president Laurels continued collaboration with the Japanese revealed that it became more and more apparent that he was using his newly appointed position to enter his own political and national ideals into the newly constructed Filipino government. Normally Laurel was one someone whom remained in the background of the political stage yet didn't prevent him from having his own thoughts about what the politicians should really be addressing. So when Laurel became president he saw the chance to begin making the Philippines into his own image. Going back to his inauguration speech there are traces of Laurels forthcoming agenda inscribed all throughout it. In one instance Laurel talks about how the citizens of the Philippines should be in their new independent state. He gives several examples in which Laurel tells the people of the Philippines to consider living:

Timppines to consider fiving

"There is a need of awakening the moral consciousness of our people so that they may be able to face their new responsibilities with added vigor and enthusiasm. We should evolve a new type of citizen who would be ready and willing to subordinate himself to the larger and more vital interests of the State. The Constitution guarantees to every man that modicum of personal liberty essential to his enjoyment of relative contentment and happiness. But of more transcendent importance than his privileges, are the duties which the individual owes to the State. The Constitution gives precedence to those obligated in consonance with the fundamental idea that man does not live for himself and his family alone but also for the State and humanity at large.

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²⁸ Laurel, Jose P. War Memoirs. Manila: Jose P. Laurel Memorial Foundation, 1962), 51-57

The new citizen, therefore, is he who knows his rights as well as his duties, and knowing them, will discharge his duties even to the extent of sacrificing his rights."²⁹

In effect, Laurel was trying to help mold that "new type of citizen" who would be "ready and willing to subordinate himself" to the State and for whom national good would take precedence over personal liberty and rights. This idea stems from Laurels stay in the United States where he was taught the law. He learned about the Bill of Rights as well as the constitution and was captivated by the fairness that he found in them. Laurel wanted to reciprocate this into the Philippine government through the people. More importantly Laurel had a different view on what he believed the people of a country should act towards their fellow man. He didn't want the newly independent Philippines to become like the United States and Japan because they were hypocrites when it came to upholding their own ideals which was more than likely the reason they were at war with each other in the first place. So to laurel collaboration with the Japanese meant that he could create a new country in his own image, one that was free of the cruel discretions that the other nations were plagued with.

Laurel knew that the war-time Constitution would not survive a peace treaty, but he did not view his effort on it as a purely academic exercise. He hoped that by introducing his ideas in the wartime draft, the post-war Constitution might be materially influenced. While maintaining its pre-war format as much as possible to gain popular compliance, he altered the very basis of the Commonwealth Constitution by ending the American supported concept of a balance of powers. The process of selecting a President, for example, was altered from one of a direct vote of the

²⁹ <u>The Phillipine Presidency Project.</u> 12 November 2009. 12 October 2010 http://filipinopresidency.multiply.com/journal/item/37.

³⁰ Castillo, Teofilo del. *The Saga of Jose P. Laurel*. (Manila & Delaware: Associated Authors Company, 1949.),18

³¹ Ibid.

electorate to that of an indirect vote of an appointed assembly. The "Declaration of Human Rights" of the Commonwealth edition became the "Duties and Rights of the Citizens" by which constitutional liberties were severely restricted. The Presidential veto was made almost absolute. The right of the Supreme Court to invoke judicial review was abolished, the Legislature's sole power over appropriations was removed, and real power devolved upon the Executive. And, in the words of his Inaugural, "The orientation of the new government under the Republic is one of centralized control for service to the people regardless of any obstacle.... Without political consolidation we cannot hope to accomplish the desired integration of our political, economic, and social life." Obviously Laurel was subject to close supervision by the Japanese, who themselves were sharply divided over policy aims in the Philippines. These differences among the Japanese existed both locally and in Tokyo, and produced a policy which contained contradictions. At one extreme were the civilian officials, men who served either in the Foreign Ministry, the Greater East Asia Ministry, or both. On the whole these men were the most interested in the actual introduction of the Co-Prosperity Sphere; their prime spokesman in Manila was Murata Shozo, who functioned first as chief civilian advisor and during the Laurel period as ambassador. In the middle of the spectrum were the members of the Japanese Military Administration, the political wing of the army. These officers, who were jointly responsible to both the Commander-in-Chief in the Philippines and the Director-General of Military Administration in Tokyo, were the officials responsible for the creation, functioning and maintenance of a Filipino government. Finally, there were the field commanders stationed throughout the Philippines. This group was most concerned with the health of its troops and the success of its military assignment, and least concerned with maintaining good relations with the Filipinos. As the war progressed and MacArthur's reinvasion drew near, the field commanders

³² Official Gazette, II, No. 1 (October 1-14, 1943)

proved to be the most callous and the most powerful. Although there was originally a rough consensus in intent for the countries conquered in early I942, the Japanese actually had a troika policy, the field commanders determining its direction in the end. All three of these groups, however, appear to have misunderstood Laurel. Having ignored him initially as the prime candidate for the Presidency, they gradually came to believe that he was just their man. They noted that he had got a Doctorate of Jurisprudence in Japan before the war, that he had sent one of his sons to Japan for military training, that he had represented a large number of Japanese firms in his pre-war law firm, and that he had spoken very favorably of some Japanese institutions. The assassination attempt against Laurel only seemed to verify their belief that he must have been more pro-Japanese than even they suspected. Unfortunately for them, they misjudged Laurel's true purpose. In fact, his desire to strengthen the executive authority of the Presidency was inimical to the Japanese fantasy of finding a charismatic but compliant puppet to serve them.

Changed Views of the Japanese

Over the course of the war Laurels thoughts of the Japanese changed with every order that the Japanese decided to give out. Laurel had many agreements with the Japanese one of which was that he would be notified that they would inform him of any arrests that they would have made, but of course they didn't. Laurel recalls an instance in which he many of the members of his cabinet were taken away:

[&]quot;Assistant Solicitor-General Jose B. L. Reyes was taken to Fort Santiago although he was at the time assigned to Malacanan: Director de Jesus (Gen.) of the Veterans Bureau: Col. Arsenio Natividad, assistant of the Chief of Constabulary; Dr. Antonio G. Sison, President of the

University of the Philippines and Director of the General Hospital, and more were arrested without my knowledge and consent although they were appointees of the President [Laurel]"³³

This was only the beginning of what the Japanese were willing to go back on in their dealings with Laurel. Another one of the things that the Japanese betrayed their agreement with Laurel was to conscript Filipinos into a Japanese formed army. The Makapili (*Makabayan Katipunan Ng Mga Pilipino* or *Alliance of Philippine Patriots*) was a militant group formed in the Philippines during World War II to give military aid to Japan. Organized by Benigno Ramos and Artemio Ricarte, they were born out of Laurel's refusal to conscript Filipinos for Japan. The Japanese decreed that the group should be founded in November 1944 when they brought together many of the supporters of the defunct Ganap Party. To the Japanese this was a way of going around their agreement of not conscripting the any Filipinos into the Japanese army. This did not matter however as the Makapili was commandeered by the Japanese general Yamashita as Laurel recalls:

"...the staff of Gen. Yamashita who by this time (Sept., '44) had assumed command of the Japanese forces, organized the Makapili, headed by Bengino Ramos, Pio Duran and Artemio Ricarte without consultation with the Republic. It was an armed body of Filipinos independent from the Republic and directly under the Imperial Japanese Forces." 34

Laurel was clearly outraged by the underhanded tricks of the Japanese in which he showed how he greatly disagreed, "I protested, and with me all of the members of my cabinet..." Laurel and his cabinet wanted to go against this specific action but as the Japanese were the dominating force in the Philippines at the time they gave backed Laurel and his cabinet into a corner that

³³ Laurel, Jose P. War Memoirs. Manila: Jose P. Laurel Memorial Foundation, 1962),30

³⁴ Ibid.,25

³⁵ Laurel, Jose P. War Memoirs. Manila: Jose P. Laurel Memorial Foundation, 1962),25

they could not get out of due to the explanation by the Japanese ambassador Shozo Murata who told Laurel and his cabinet that, "...our refusal would be interpreted as an act of noncollaboration..." which was a common tactic used by the Japanese towards members of the Philippine government throughout the war.

One of the ways that the Japanese got the members of the Philippines to collaborate was to threaten them and their families. Since many of the members had families it was a very effective way of getting them to collaborate. In one instance the son of a Commonwealth politician Jose Abad Santos recalls how his father died. Santos was the appointed and acting head of the Commonwealth Government of the Philippines when he refused to accompany President Quezon to Australia in refuge. He and his son were captured some time later and he was asked to take a "...cooperative stance..." with the Japanese, but he refused. So after transferring to various Japanese camps within the Philippine jungle Abad Santos was forced to dig his own grave after which he was immediately riddled with bullets and buried. When news of such events reached Laurel and the other politicians it lit the fire of survival within influencing them towards the notion of collaborating with the Japanese.

It seems that there were two primary reasons that Laurel collaborated with the Japanese during his reign as the President of the puppet government: 1.To pass his own political and national agenda onto the people of the Philippines, 2. To uphold the national survival of the Filipino people. Although Laurel and cabinet decided that it would be less tragic to collaborate with the Japanese, it seems that they were naïve to believe so. According to Laurels daughter Laurel commented on many of the atrocities committed to the people of the Philippines:

³⁶ Castillo, Teofilo del. *The Saga of Jose P. Laurel.* (Manila & Delaware: Associated Authors Company, 1949), 164-165

"...the arrests, tortures and disappearance of good people; the inattention to and disregard of our pleas in behalf of our people; the commandeering of houses animals, automobiles, trucks and properties of private citizens...their domination of our government and the government officials—the preaching contrary to actual deeds—...and more made it evident that the Filipinos were doomed under Japanese occupation or influence..."

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Many of the atrocities that Laurel describes were unavoidable as he and his cabinet were helpless to take any further action as it would have been seen as an act of non-collaboration with the Japanese. Ironically for Laurel in order to reduce the mass atrocities that were occurring before he became president he had to calmly bite his tongue about the smaller ones that occurred under his leadership.

Chapter III. Jorge B. Vargas

Why Vargas became Mayor

The most controversial person among the elite in the occupied Philippines was Jorge B. Vargas. His role in the government has caused heated debates among scholars who argue for and against his motives as collaborator. Jorge Vargas was the most vocal about his feelings towards the United States, praising Japan's advancement in the war. Nevertheless, Vargas had a burning passion to see Philippine independence realized regardless of how it was achieved.

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³⁷ Avancena, Rose L. *Days of Courage*. Manila, 1980., 111

With the Japanese forces making their way towards the Philippines President Quezon was advised by General MacArthur to flee the country. At first he protested thinking that he needed to stay and protect his country but later realized that he needed to coordinate with the American forces if the Philippines were to make it out of their eventual occupation then he would have to go. However, another issue made its way into his mind: Who would run the country while he was away? There was also the matter of handing over the Philippine government in one piece over to the Japanese. There was only one name that popped into Quezon's head: Jorge Vargas.

But why Vargas? What had he done in order to be on top of Quezon's list of capable men to save the Philippines? A brief look into his past can illustrate the close political relationship that Vargas and Quezon had. Vargas began his political career on the Quezon administration amid the American- Philippine collaboration. Jorge Vargas started his political career as the first secretary for Senator Quezon in 1981. Vargas did not agree with the idea of having the Americans pulling the strings of the Philippine government thinking that the Commonwealth government could not hold its own. ³⁸When the commonwealth began in 1935 Vargas continued to serve as secretary to the President gaining the nickname "Little President" because he was Quezon's "eyes and ears" in various government corporation and boards such as the Philippine National Bank and the Sugar Control Board. ³⁹ Vargas had a sense that something was about to happen that would involve the Japanese in the Philippines because of one incident. One day his help, a Japanese national, had suddenly disappeared. When the word came that Pearl Harbor was attacked Vargas immediately notified President Quezon, who was in disbelief. Suffice it to say

³⁸ Saulo, Alfredo B. Let George Do It. (Quezon City: University of the Phillipines Press, 1992.),5

³⁹ Malay, Armondo J. *Occupied Philippines: The Role of Jorge B. Vargas during the Japanese Occupation.* (Manila: Filipina Book Guild, 1967.),6

Quezon would have needed someone who could things and think along the same line as he would. Vargas showed his loyalty towards Quezon and the Commonwealth by declaring his loyalty towards Quezon by saying, "no matter what happens you can count upon me, whether here in Malacanan, if the Japanese allow me to remain, or in my house in Kawilihan." ⁴⁰After being appointed the mayor of the Commonwealth government Vargas immediately began to put into action plans that he believed would protect the people of the Philippines and halt the Japanese in their efforts to use the resources of the Philippines to their advantage.

Deeds of Patriotism

Before they left Vargas was advised by MacArthur and Quezon to "Cooperate with them (the Japanese), if necessary..." but not "...take an oath of allegiance." With those words Vargas was ordered to put into play many plans to obstruct the Japanese, the first being the closing of the power plants. Mac Arthur had ordered that the power plant in Manila be destroyed before the Japanese arrived so that they could not use it. However when Vargas arrived at the power plant the manger claimed that he had also received the order from Mac Arthur but did not wish to destroy the plant. Surprisingly, Vargas advised him not to for this reason:

"I do not want you to destroy the Meralco. What would happen to the three million people left here in the city if you razed the electric plant? You would make everybody suffer. You can't do that!"

 $^{^{40}}$ Saulo, Alfredo B. *Let George Do It.* (Quezon City: University of the Phillipines Press, 1992.),108

⁴¹ Malay, Armondo J. *Occupied Philippines: The Role of Jorge B. Vargas during the Japanese Occupation.* (Manila: Filipina Book Guild, 1967.),5

⁴² Ibid.,100

⁴³Malay, Armondo J. *Occupied Philippines: The Role of Jorge B. Vargas during the Japanese Occupation.* (Manila: Filipina Book Guild, 1967.),100

When the manager gave him a quizzical look he commented to him to "...just disable some machines" in order to ease his conscience. Vargas also agreed to take full responsibility for the obvious act of going against Mac Arthurs orders. From Vargas point of view he was merely looking out for the people of the Manila later on stating that:

"...that was how we saved the Meralco for the benefit of the people in the city residents during that critical period when everybody was nervous because of the Japanese invasion...Mac Arthur was safe in Corregidor...Manila was practically abandoned to the enemy." Along with the power plants Vargas was also ordered to destroy the gas tanks. Although it was part of the larger order by MacArthur to "...leave nothing behind that would be of use to the enemy." Vargas had second thoughts against the order to destroy the fuel. This was based off the fact that Vargas knew that the loss of the gasoline would bring many of the city services to a standstill. Surprisingly Vargas decided to let the fuel burn anyway since he deemed it too valuable to let the Japanese get their hands on it. An important question as to why Vargas believed that the gas could be burned and not the power plant be destroyed should be considered. As mentioned in both accounts by Vargas both of these energy sources were a valuable commodity to the Filipino people and was important to their survival. It may be that Vargas decided that the gas would be able to be used by the Japanese themselves while the machine in the power plant could only be used and operated by the Filipino people so it could only be useful to the Filipino people at their discretion.

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⁴⁴Saulo, Alfredo B. *Let George Do It.* (Quezon City: University of the Phillipines Press, 1992.),100

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.,101

After dealing with the power plant and gas cans Vargas went on to the next thing that he had been ordered to do. He made an attempt to destroy any type of financial advantage that the Japanese could have gotten from the Philippines. He began by ordering all of the money and securities to be transferred to the bank in Corregidor. The money and securities were "...worth millions of pesos." According to Vargas and his main intention was to protect them from the Japanese so that the owners could get them back after the war. Vargas was also ordered to destroy most of the currency used in the Philippines but to save enough to tide the country over the span of the war. He even went so far as to form a seven man destruction committee to oversee the burning of the money. According to Vargas up to seven million pesos were burned.

The last order on Vargas to do list was that he was to open all of the warehouses to the public and let the people take what they wanted and/or needed to get through the span of the war. However this did not do them much good as the Japanese occupiers would just take what they wanted from the people anyways. Now while some of the things Vargas did would have seemed like a patriotic act by Vargas, to someone like MacArthur it would seem to be a disregard to his orders as well as an attempt to collaborate with the Japanese for his own personal purposes. As mentioned before Vargas was no advocate of following the orders of any kind of US official and in light of that his act of leaving the factory unscathed could be considered an act of intentional collaboration on Vargas' part.

Acts of Collaboration

⁴⁷ Saulo, Alfredo B. *Let George Do It.* (Quezon City: University of the Phillipines Press, 1992.),101

⁴⁸ Ibid., 100

Before long, Japanese planes and troops swarmed the Philippines. The Japanese soon pushed their way towards Manila. On December 26, 1941, the commonwealth government declared it an "open city", General MacArthur began to retreat his forces to Bataan and Corregidor. This tactical move was very important because with Quezon living in exile the world would still view the Philippines under the United States umbrella. Within weeks, the Japanese had succeeded in accomplishing their prime political aim: the active collaboration of the most prestigious Filipinos under the Japanese control. Jorge Vargas was now in a position of power, but on the other hand he saw himself as a caretaker of the commonwealth government in exile. Thus far, the portrayal of Jorge Vargas is of a man who took the lead in the beginning of the occupation, willing to protect the people of the Philippines and honor the government in exile. Nevertheless, a change occurred in Vargas that led him to cooperate fully with the Japanese occupation forces.

At the beginning of the war when Quezon made Vargas the mayor of greater Manila he unknowingly gave him absolute power over the entire government. The powers that were granted to Vargas were necessary as indicated by the Commonwealth Act No. 620. These powers were to only be initiated in the case of "a state of total emergency" making whoever was in charge (in this case Vargas) "a virtual dictator or czar". On June 6, 1941 Act No. 620 was approved which amended the Emergency Powers Act by investing the president with "extraordinary powers that

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⁴⁹ Malay, Armondo J. *Occupied Philippines: The Role of Jorge B. Vargas during the Japanese Occupation.* (Manila: Filipina Book Guild, 1967.),26

⁵⁰ Martinez, Carlos Manuel. "Filipino collaboration and resistance movement against the Japanese during World War II." *2001*. (San Diego: San Diego State University, 10 12, 2010.),37

⁵¹ Saulo, Alfredo B. *Let George Do It.* (Quezon City: University of the Phillipines Press, 1992.),97

in order to safeguard the integrity of the Philippines and assure the tranquility of its inhabitants."⁵²As seen above the initial use of these powers were to thwart the Japanese efforts, but then Vargas' use of these powers began to change when the Japanese actually arrived. The Japanese arrived in Manila Vargas was visited by many of the Japanese officials who kept on pressuring him to put into effect many of the Japanese policies that they wanted put into effect. In fact the Japanese wanted three main things form the Commonwealth government. 1) A new government under the tutelage of the Japanese, 2) the giving of the function of the government to the Civilian emergency Administration and 3) the continuation of the Commonwealth government by electing a new President and vice president. To Vargas this seemed to be a great opportunity in order to use his new found power as dictator of the Philippines to his advantage. Ever since he became the secretary under President Quezon Vargas figured that someday he would be President of the Commonwealth government. Now that the Japanese were intending to create a new government that he could be running he was sure to jump at the chance to do so. He started to do so by implementing some of the policies that he and Quezon had wanted to put into effect under the Commonwealth government.

Because of this Vargas also decided to lay down his own ground rules that he wanted the Japanese forces to abide by: 1) permit the "continuance and status and authority" of Vargas as the mayor of greater Manila, 2) provide protection of life and property in the city, 3) grant free religious worship, and 4) recognize the "existing laws and orders as well as customs and usages,

⁵² Ibid.

excepting those incompatible with the new situation."⁵³This agreement however was never honored by the Japanese as seen in an excerpt from Vargas stating:

"...the agreement soon became a dead letter because the Japanese never complied with it. When the Japanese soldiers saw a nice looking car, they would just tell the owner or driver to get out, and they would drive away in the car. ...And later they commandeered laborers and supplies without even informing the city mayor." ⁵⁴

As Vargas would soon learn, the Japanese had no intention of working together with the government of the Philippines but keep to their own agenda and simply use them as an outpost for greater Japan. Yet Vargas still signed the agreement regardless of the fact that he knew in the back of mind that Japanese would not comply with it. Vargas further showed his naïve gravitation towards collaborating with the Japanese when Tojo gave his speech that assured the people of the Philippines independence as long as they cooperated, it became clear to the exiled government that and the United States that Vargas had become a collaborator for the chance to move the Philippines towards independence. Vargas remarked:

"Personally, this confirms my confidence and trust in the true and benevolent intentions of the Japanese Imperial Forces, and I am glad I have been given the opportunity to cooperate and work with them in the administration of the government and in the maintenance of peace and order in our capital city." ⁵⁵

Vargas had officially become a collaborator with the invading Japanese forces. Now whether this was a purposeful act or one out of desperation to avoid conflicts with the Japanese forces is still unknown. Given that Vargas was using Quezon's parting words as a guideline to make any of

⁵³ Saulo, Alfredo B. *Let George Do It.* (Quezon City: University of the Phillipines Press, 1992.),110-111

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Martinez, Carlos Manuel. "Filipino collaboration and resistance movement against the Japanese during World War II." *2001*. (San Diego: San Diego State University, 10 12, 2010.),36

the decisions that he made it is safe to assume that he was doing it in the interest of the Filipino people.

Similar to Laurel, Vargas also wanted to improve the way that the citizens of the Philippines were living. In his early years, just before the war, during his job under President Quezon, Vargas worked on a social justice program. As part of the Philippines future independence Quezon and Vargas believed that there was a need for "the promotion of social justice to insure the well being and economic security of all the people should be the primary concern of the state. The main point of social justice to insure the well being and economic security of all the people should be the primary concern of the state."⁵⁶.In a report Vergas wrote that the administrations philosophy of social justice would be developed into a "workable pattern for social life"⁵⁷. With social justice assured from the very outset, peace and order would prevail throughout the country and Filipinos lived in comparative prosperity as agriculture and industry made steady progress. During the Japanese occupation much of what the Japanese changed were the reforms that the Japanese were putting into effect during their occupation. Since the original goal of the Commonwealth government was to achieve political independence this seemed like a good time as any to try and put that plan into motion. As economic prosperity and equality was part of that independence Vargas figured that when the Japanese landed they would allow him to put any of the economic reforms into effect that he and president Quezon would have wanted to put into effect. Given the power that Vargas had now received he began putting these things into effect. However he did know that this would only end up benefiting

⁵⁶ Saulo, Alfredo B. Let George Do It. (Quezon City: University of the Phillipines Press, 1992.),91

⁵⁷ Ibid.,92

In addition to Vargas, several others became attracted to the Japanese institutions. For example, Pio Duran had always resented the American forces: he was clear example of the people who were beginning to admire the greatness of the Japanese empire. He argued that Filipinos should consider being assimilated by Japan because "Our children's children will become citizens of the mightiest Empire or Republic in the Orient, if not the World." Ironically Pio Duran became a congressman after the war. Nonetheless, the majority of the Filipino citizens did not buy the pleas of Vargas and Duran; many were upset about gaining in to the Japanese because the Filipino nationals knew there was a problem with the deal. Another drawback was that those same Filipinos felt they were not yet ready for self-government.

Meanwhile, Vargas authorized an executive order to comply with Japanese occupation forces. Vargas' aim partly read: "to adhere strictly to the policies of the Imperial Forces of the Philippines in their administration and to render service in the establishment of the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere." Vargas made a grave mistake in thinking the Japanese would remain in the Philippines for many years. The praise Vargas was giving the Japanese forces was sickening to other elite men who did not want to collaborate. Vargas had said that the Filipinos were "grateful for this victory because of the new perspective it has given us... [and] because it has vindicated all Asiatic people whose rights and genius have been denied due recognition by Occidental civilization" The Executive Commission of the Council of State was established because Vargas believed the Japanese would honor their right toward independence. It also came

⁵⁸ Martinez, Carlos Manuel. "Filipino collaboration and resistance movement against the Japanese during World War II." *2001*. (San Diego: San Diego: State University, 10 12, 2010.),37

⁵⁹ Ibid.,16

⁶⁰ Ibid.,66

into existence because the Japanese Commander-in-Chief General Homma required all politicians to collaborate with the Japanese forces.

Later on President Quezon learned that his men were setting up a new government under the guidance of the Japanese occupational forces. He communicated with them and affirmed that he still had faith in them to do the right thing. Meanwhile, the American forces were apprehensive over the situation in Manila, for Jorge Vargas had indeed created a new government under provisions made by the Japanese forces. He became the leader of the Executive commission and in 1943 issued Executive Order No. 156, "amending the Khalibapi chapter".61, Vargas was able to get young men and women involved. Policies and directions of the Japanese army were the focus of the Khalibapi. The objective of the Khalibapi was to use the media, media theaters, rallies, speeches, etc., to get the word out. Filipinos who wasn't employment with the governments had to become Khalibapi members to obtain a government position. The Japanese also welcomed the Junior Kalibapi because young people were easier to mold towards the Japanese ideology rather than the older adults. Vargas intentions and loyalty to the Japanese government became more apparent and he definitely began to walk a thin line between cooperation and collaboration. Just like some of the other Filipinos, Vargas believed that the Japanese would win the war thereby making commitments by ratifying laws and installing new government without the consent of the government-in-exile or the people. He gave proof of this with various speeches to the people of the Philippines mostly praising the Japanese and expressing regret towards the Philippines rule under the US:

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⁶¹ Malay, Armondo J. *Occupied Philippine: The Role of Jorge B. Vargas during the Japanese Occupation.* (Manila: Filipina Book Guild, 1967.), 78

"We have gone a long way in the last forty years. Travelling in the direction of the West, following its pleasant call, we have gone through a superficial metamorphosis. We have been obliged to alter our mode of life, our conventions, and our institutions to suit the Occidental pattern. ... Now we have reached a point in our odyssey as a people where we can no longer look to the West. We must turn our faces East, in the direction in which our forefathers had anxiously cast their eyes..."

Vargas had incriminated himself over the charge of collaborating with the enemy during the war. He followed the orders of the Japanese forces because of fears that he would be killed if he disobeyed. Despite Vargas excellent performance as chairman of the Executive Commission, the Japanese military proved to be cruel taskmasters. They were not satisfied with his personal involvement alone. If he had been bad at the job he was given then the Oriental despots in the guise of liberators would have tried to get him to extend more cooperation to them by involving his family. On one occasion, his eldest daughter, Nena, was asked to make a radio broadcast on behalf of the Japanese. Of course this was just an attempt to get into closer to Vargas' wife to get her to say something on behalf of the Japanese forces. This was probably one of the greatest things that got Vargas to participate with the Japanese as they would not stop meddling with his family. Another incident in which the Japanese would mess with Vargas is that they would not allow the parents of the Filipino children being sent off to Japan in order to learn about the Japanese way to see them off. This was especially disheartening to Vargas as two of his children Eduardo and Ramon were being sent off. Although it seems like this would upset Vargas (and it did) it was just another way for the Japanese forces to show their dominance over Vargas and the Filipino people thus forcing him and others to comply with their wishes.

⁶² Saulo, Alfredo B. *Let George Do It.* (Quezon City: University of the Phillipines Press, 1992.),5 Saulo, Alfredo B. *Let George Do It.* (Quezon City: University of the Phillipines Press, 1992.),126

However, he showed the Americans whose side he was on with his speeches that praised the Japanese government and its effort to unite all of Asia under the Greater Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. When Bataan fell, he gave an incriminating statement when he said:

"The surrender of Bataan is a wise decision on the part of the Filipinos fighting here, as it means the stopping of further sacrifice in futile an unequal resistance of so many young lives of which the nation is sorely in need in these crucial times. With the occupation of Bataan and the rest of the southern islands, peace and tranquility will be returned to many Filipino homes disrupted by the armed conflict, the entire Philippines will again be united, and we can now undertake in earnest the rehabilitation and reconstruction of our beloved country."

However, through all of this an important question should be asked: Is being pro-Oriental and critical of the West, particularly the US, an act of collaboration and treason by Vargas and the Filipino people? This would be one of the main points that Vargas would have to defend himself in his trial.

Vargas would later go to say that: "With all the resources at our command, the Filipinos people should have immediately set their shoulders to the task of building up a greater Philippines under the able and unselfish guidance, leadership, and assistance of the great Japanese Empire in order to rightfully deserve a place as an active member of the Co-Prosperity Sphere of greater Asia, in the realization that both geographically and racially our natural position lies in that sphere."

⁶³ Malay, Armondo J. *Occupied Philippines: The Role of Jorge B. Vargas during the Japanese Occupation.* (Manila: Filipina Book Guild, 1967.),97

⁶⁴ Ibid.

Chapter IV.

Collaboration Trial/Issue of Loyalty

Toward the end of the war, returning Filipino officials turned their attention to the issues of loyalty, resistance and collaboration. The price for loyalty after the war was fiercely controversial. What loyalty is to some is different to others; nevertheless, a true patriot showed his loyalty for his country through his actions. Two sides came about, with one defending the collaborators and the other side condemning their actions. How can one measure the loyalty to a party, or fellow human being? Are there parameters one must follow or obey in order to prove ones loyalty? A journalist writing on the trial defended the collaborators by saying that "it was humanly impossible for all to evade the enemy, unless, of course, all joined the resistance movement in the mountains. Moreover, that, too, was humanly impossible. Thus, all those who were forced to remain had to submit to the arbitrary wishes of the Japanese in order to survive. In fact Laurel and Vargas were being accused of treason on two fronts: 1) the betrayal of the Filipino people and 2) the betrayal of the United States who were supposedly helping them in the war.

Laurel

Laurel may have failed to project his views, however, for an even more profound reason. The attractiveness of "guided democracy" as a means of development may have appeal only to a society at a certain stage of political development which the Philippines had already passed through by 1943. Unlike a military dictatorship, which can unfortunately arise at anytime and anywhere, Laurel's type of authoritarian centralization (however pragmatically and materially

⁶⁵ Agoncillo, Teodoro A. *The Burden of Proof: The Vargas and Laurel Collaboration Case.* Mandaluyong: University of the Philippines Press for the U.P.-Jorge B. Vargas Filipina Research Center, 1984., 128

beneficial) must depend on the willing compliance of the political elite and the implied approval of the people, who would agree that such political restrictions are necessary for the general advancement. Unless there is that recognition of the need to devolve power to one man, there is a small chance that one man can attain that paramount position. The Philippine people, both at the top and at the bottom of the political structure, were no longer willing to tolerate such complete rule by one man, no matter how great the material rewards of industrialization. The years of American colonial control had created a framework of institutional life in which a system of checks and balances emerged within the Filipino oligarchy. Quezon possessed enough power to disregard this system when he wanted to, but he was usually content to exercise control by operating within the system. With his death there was no one strong enough to impose his will either on the other politicians or on the institutional system. Once a group emerged which believed that the greatest hope for both its personal and group ambitions lay in strengthening its hegemony as an oligarchy, there probably was no longer room for authoritarian domination by one man. The failure of Laurel's wartime gamble, then, can be seen as an interesting control in an experiment involving what has happened so commonly elsewhere since the war. Brilliant, charismatic, and determined in his efforts toward his objectives, Laurel failed for reasons beyond his control. But the meaning of that failure transcends its implications during the war. The crisis in the political development of the newly emerged nations has just begun. There is much to be learned from Laurel's unsuccessful attempt to reform his society along lines which have become as familiar as underdeveloped states try to alter their very essence in order to achieve the so called benefits of the modern world.

Laurel defended himself during his trial through seven argumentative questions and statements to defend his position. I will go over the most important ones because they are with

the first one being: Did we freely and voluntarily collaborate with Japan, and if so, is the collaboration treasonable upon the facts and under the circumstances of that collaboration?⁶⁶Laurel starts to answer by explaining the reasons leading up to the War and Japanese occupation in the Philippines. Laurel explains how the people of the Philippines were slowly awaiting their liberation by the Americans when suddenly the Japanese forces arrived ruining that opportunity. He then ends with the statement that the Japanese occupied the Philippines and his net point that: Military occupation gives rise to a temporary allegiance of the inhabitants of the occupied territory to the conquering power in return for temporary protection. ⁶⁷In defense of this point Laurels argument shifts towards the defense of the International law which states that "to the victor goes the spoils" indicated the since the Japanese had successfully driven the US out of the Philippines they had the right to the resources available there to their advantage. He later goes on to defend the collaboration of the entire Filipino people in stating that "temporary allegiance in return for temporary protection" This was an interesting argument for Laurel since he was trying to defend himself from the accusations that he and the other elites in the government were not committing treason as a result of their collaboration with the Japanese. Although it may seem this way, Laurel is actually posing a valuable point as to why they collaborated. Once again Laurels idea of the law finds its way into his arguments when he says:

"...and obedience to the dominant physical power in compliance with the decrees, orders, directives and proclamations of the army of occupation. This is collaboration, in the ultimate analysis, whose limitation is not easy to determine because, while in certain instance it is

⁶⁶ Laurel, Jose P. War Memoirs. Manila: Jose P. Laurel Memorial Foundation, 1962),50

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

classified by a rule of law or convention or declaration, it is however dependent in practice upon almost unlimited exercise of discretion on the vast field of military operations and military necessity. That is to say, were the military authority over an occupied territory to issue an order volatile of treaties and international agreements, or compel the performance or execution of acts contrary to the usage of war, or prejudicial to the temporarily supplanted power, the legal and moral responsibility is attributable to the military authorities and not to the inhabitants of the occupied territory whose only alternative is to obey to the extent required by the Army of occupation. Collaboration there had to be *ex-necessitate re* and this collaboration is not punishable and less treasonable in the light of the accepted legal principle formulated above."

With this argument Laurel claims that it is not the fault of the people of the Philippines that they collaborated with the Japanese because, in accordance with the laws agreed upon by the entire world, the occupied countries had no choice but to comply with the wishes of the greater military power that had occupied their country. Therefore, Laurel and his colleagues were not responsible

Laurel then goes on to attack those who were not in the Philippine by saying:

the laws of the rules of war, which could have had far dire consequences.

"It is easy to speak on loyalty, courage and determination by radio, removed from the zone of danger, but when you find yourself at the point of the bayonet from all directions in an occupied territory where disobedience or any gesture of hostile character meant not only sure death for you but perhaps desolation and wholesale massacre of people around you..."

for their actions because if they did not they would not only be risking their lives but breaking

His argument slowly changes to one of understanding and ridicule to the people that were accusing him of being a traitor of his country. This is also a defense of why he and his colleagues collaborated as he mentioned any act of hostility would bring harm upon himself and the people of the Philippines. If this were to happen then Laurel and the others would have failed to carry

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⁷⁰ Laurel, Jose P. War Memoirs. Manila: Jose P. Laurel Memorial Foundation, 1962),51

⁷¹ Ibid,52

out the final words of the departed President Quezon, and that Laurel believed would have been the true for of betrayal to the Filipino people.

Laurels attack continued as he moves on to his next argument: The invasion and consequent military occupation of the Philippines were due to unpreparedness-not to say culpable negligence of the United States. If the U.S. had been prepared to repel the Japanese invasion, there would have been no military occupation there could have been no military occupation of the Philippines; and without military occupation there could have been no collaboration. Therefore, the collaboration of the Filipinos was, in the last analysis, attributable to the unpreparedness and fault of the United States. 72 Laurel attacks the U.S. for their lack of ability to protect the Philippines even though it had been a known fact that they did not have the means of defending the Philippines from an attack from "a first class military power, like Japan."⁷³ Therefore Laurel claimed that the entire reason that the people of the Philippines collaborated with the Japanese was due to the unpreparedness of the U.S. on defending the Philippines. Laurel also refers to moral implication in this by saying that it was morally wrong of the U.S. to accuse the Filipinos of crimes against them when it was the fault of the U.S. that the Japanese occupied the Philippines in the first place. Like the law Laurel's ideals about moral values was represented in his argument about the United States lack of protection of the Philippines. Laurel believed that this was particularly true because regardless of the fact that the US military in the Philippines knew that they could not protect the people of the Philippines yet they expected them to defend themselves.

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⁷²Laurel, Jose P. War Memoirs. Manila: Jose P. Laurel Memorial Foundation, 1962),52-53

⁷³ Ibid..53

Laurel next two arguments are the core of his argument in which he claims that: *Forced* collaboration is not collaboration. Voluntary collaboration as a means of national survival and to tide over our people to better times is not punishable and then distinguishing the difference between *Heroism and collaboration*. ⁷⁴ He does this through six points:

- 1. Laurel talked about the alluring offer of independence from the Japanese to the Filipino people. Laurel claims that idea of independence for the Filipinos was long awaited and already being proposed by the U.S. So assuming that the same circumstances and rules applied to the Japanese offer of independence, then it was only right that the Filipino people accepted the Japanese offer of independence. Laurel is referring to the Filipino as a whole and is therefore claiming that he and the cabinet alone are not the only ones who would have collaborated with the Japanese for independence as well.
- 2. Laurel talks about his being forced into the presidency of the Philippines. He mentions how he and his wife were against this notion as it would make him seem as if he were intentionally collaborating the Japanese. However, Laurel goes on to accept the presidency to present himself as "the archetype of genuine patriotism and proven loyalty" Laurel did this because he knew that if he did not accept the presidency not only would the Japanese harm him and his family and just put a Japanese official into office making the suffering of the Filipino people even greater. To Laurel this was simply a sacrifice for his people.
- 3. Laurel discusses Pan-Asianism and compares it with other types of expansionist colonial policies in other countries. Since the U.S. government knows about the idea of imperial expansion and what they did to the natives then it should be reasonable that the Filipino people would react in the same way. Laurel also takes this chance to declare his stance on collaborating with the Japanese saying that he "did not believe that the avowed lofty purposes therein embodied could not be realized with Japan's militaristic and economic plan of expansion."⁷⁶ He also states that his duty was to protect the people of the Philippines until the war was over.
- 4. Laurel talks about the signing of the alliance agreement from the Japanese. He claims that the circumstances in which the leaders had to sign were less than desirable and the act of signing was unavoidable. He also mentions the things that they refused to

⁷⁴ Laurel, Jose P. War Memoirs. Manila: Jose P. Laurel Memorial Foundation, 1962),60

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

- do with the Japanese such as: "the conscription of Filipinos into the Japanese army, to create a department of National Defense or appoint Messers.⁷⁷
- 5. Laurel talks about how the Philippine government were pushed into a corner in order to sign the declaration of war against the U.S. He was careful to mention that they tried to stall as long as they could from signing the treaty.
- 6. Finally Laurel claims that all of the evidence that proved the collaboration of him and the rest of the Philippine government was left in the desk in his office and that he refused to get rid of it in spite of some of the Japanese officials pressuring him to do so at the return of the war. This to laurel was the ultimate form of innocence in which he felt that if he was guilty he would have gotten rid of the evidence, suggesting that he was not a treasonous collaborator.

Vargas

Notwithstanding the risk of being misunderstood and, possibly, condemned by history, Vargas, after the war, freely and openly admitted having collaborated with the Japanese because collaboration was inevitable under the circumstances. He had to deal with the Japanese under Quezons instructions. But in admitting the charge of collaboration, he stoutly denied having committed treason against the Filipino people. Thus, by implication, Vargas drew the line between collaboration as a treasonable act and collaboration as an act not punishable under the law. Furthermore, in the colonial context, it may be interesting to ask if Filipinos who collaborated with the enemy for the sake of national survival necessarily became disloyal to the United States. The question arose when an American investigator from the U.S. attorney general's office, after a brief stay in Manila in the late1945, recommended to President Truman that key Filipino collaborators be brought to trial for "treason to the United States, if for nothing else," because they were considered "Americas quislings" ⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Ibid, p.61

⁷⁸ Saulo, Alfredo B. *Let George Do It.* (Quezon City: University of the Phillipines Press, 1992.),107

After the war Vargas was charged before the Peoples Court with treason on 115 counts more than half of which were based on his speeches. It is evident that what the Office of the Special Prosecutors did was to quote out of context those passages which appeared as "tending to alienate the allegiance and loyalty of the Filipino people from the United States and the Commonwealth of the Philippines." Of course, the great majority of the speeches were calculated to flatter the Japanese, showering them with undeserved praise and glossing over the harsh realities of the situation in occupied territory. There was, indeed a method in this systematic flattery, because from the same speeches one could see the larger and higher objective of the speaker. To say that Vargas had committed treason not once but 115 times must have struck the people like a blinding thunderbolt. Treason, in the average layman's language, means "delivering up or betraying the country to the enemy" How could Vargas have publically committed treason by following Quezons instructions? And how could he have committed such a heinous crime so many times and yet escaped violent retribution at the hands of the Filipino people.

As far as the Filipinos were concerned, Vargas and his colleagues during the Japanese regime had faithfully implemented Quezon's instructions. Except for some minor bruises, the Filipino people survived the ordeal of military occupation creditably well. As President Osema said in one of his speeches, some Filipino leaders like Vargas and Laurel "had to remain in their posts to maintain a semblance of government, to protect the population from the oppressor to the extent possible by human ingenuity and to comfort the people in their misery. Had their services

⁷⁹Saulo, Alfredo B. *Let George Do It.* (Quezon City: University of the Phillipines Press, 1992.),125

not been available the Japanese would have governed themselves and utilized their Filipino supporters who were capable of treason themselves.⁸⁰

Three times Vargas could have, if he had not seen his duty, left the service had he persisted. The first time was when President Quezon appointed him as mayor of greater Manila. About to flee a beleaguered Manila, how could Quezon have imposed his will, even if his were an iron will, on a man who insisted on leaving? Vargas could have just stayed in Kawilihan or in his farm in Negros and risked the wrath of the President. But yet he stayed and carried out his will along with MacArthur's regardless of the previously stated option above. Vargas' ignorance towards these options can be carefully explained by his earlier relationship with Quezon during the Commonwealth period. The second time was when the Japanese military authorities, headed by General Maeda, insisted that the head of the Central Government. Vargas recalls that he suggested a politician like Laurel, Yulo or Recto, pleading that he was the just an appointive official in the Commonwealth Government. Or Vargas could have pretended he was a sick man, as Manuel Roxas did. The third time was when Laurel became President of the Japanese sponsored Republic, paving the way for Vargas' leaving the government. But Vargas was told that Emperor Hirohito wanted him as the Philippine ambassador to Tokyo and would have no other Filipino for that post.

In these instances and at any other time during the occupation, Vargas could have retired and become a gentleman-farmer as many others had done. But his duty was outlined for him and it was expressed succinctly for him by President Quezon and General MacArthur: "Stay with the people and do what the Japanese will ask you to do." The people needed leaders, especially

⁸⁰ Ibid., 197

during those crucial times, and Destiny had touched him with her wand. Actually, Vargas thought of himself as the caretaker for the commonwealth government-in-exile. As such, it was his duty, as much as was possible, to protect the people against the invaders. Three examples gave rise to this:

- 1. When the Philippine Executive Commission was being organized, he was asked if he wanted the title "President" He declined and suggested "Chairman" To him, there was only one President: Manuel L. Quezon. To sport the same title did not sit well on Vargas' conscience.
- 2. As head of government, he could have made Malacanan his home and slept in Quezon's bedroom. Instead, he chose to go home every evening to Kawilihan.
 - "To sleep in the President's bed would have been a desecration...It would have been unthinkable."⁸¹
- 3. Even when he was already chairman of the Philippine Executive Commission, he held out against the use of Quezon office in Malacanan. He continued to use his own office on the ground floor of Malacanan until Consul Jitaro Kihara warned him that unless he moved upstairs the Japanese Military Administration would take over the place. The idea of a uniformed Japanese sitting at Quezon's desk was as repulsive as Vargas sleeping in Quezon's bed; so, he finally consented to move into the President's office.

Vargas entered a plea of innocence when he was arraigned in the Peoples Court. Vargas defense during the trial was based off of two primary arguments:

- 1. That he was ordered by President Quezon and MacArthur to stay behind and do what the Japanese told him to do, short of taking the oath of allegiance to the Japanese
- 2. The having accepted the role of Mayor of greater Manila and Chairman of the Philippine Executive Commission in compliance with Quezon and MacArthur's orders, he had to obey, in turn, the demands of the Japanese Military Administration, generally transmitted to him through his "advisor" Consul Ahira. 82

For instance, in lauding the Japanese during the "victory parade" held at the New Luneta on May 18, 1942, Vargas found the opportunity to expose the real problem of the Filipinos long

⁸¹ Saulo, Alfredo B. Let George Do It. (Quezon City: University of the Phillipines Press, 1992.), 127

⁸² Agoncillo, Teodoro A. *The Burden of Proof: The Vargas and Laurel Collaboration Case*. (Mandaluyong: University of the Philippines Press for the U.P.-Jorge B. Vargas Filipina Research Center , 1984.), 148

alienated from their Asian neighbors because of Western domination. The victory of the Imperial Japanese forces had proved the "fallacy of the doctrine of Western superiority that has been incessantly preached with such disarming sophistry that it had left a painful imprint on our consciousness..." This victory, according to him, gave the Filipinos and opportunity for a new life. Where it may be asked is the proof that Vargas gave "aid and comfort to the enemy?" In this connection is this self-reexamination by Vargas in an effort to search for the true identity of the Filipino people and find out when and where the Filipinos "lost their way," a crime against the people of the Philippines? Was it treason? And if so against whom? At a conference on Oriental culture Vargas spoke these words:

"The early Filipinos were known to be endowed with the best of the Oriental virtues. They were obedient to their elders...Family ties were close...Courage and endurance, honesty and thrift, diligence and industry were prevalent virtue."

He then goes on to ridicule the way that the Filipino people became due to the effects of the West (specifically the United States):

"...years of American influence have caused a metamorphosis in Filipino individual and national life. The spirit of self-sacrifice was replaced by excessive individualism and selfishness. The Filipino lost the charm so characteristic of Oriental peoples." 84

As mentioned before does the idea of being Pro Oriental and critical of the West necessarily prove as treason against the Filipino people? Vargas said that from the beginning Filipino heroes had fought and died for national liberation from the subjugation of Western Imperialism. Then the Greater East Asia War came and accomplished what the Filipinos had always sought without success in spite of repeated sacrifices. "We in the Philippines will not, we

⁸³ Saulo, Alfredo B. *Let George Do It.* (Quezon City: University of the Phillipines Press, 1992.),127

⁸⁴ Ibid.

cannot, close our eyes to the glorious dawn of Asia. We will not, we cannot, close our ears to the call of our Oriental blood."85 A futile suicide of the Filipino race, was to charge Vargas and the other wartime leaders with treason, doubtless at the promoting of the Americanism for "collaborating" with the Japanese in the interest of national survival. Paying lip service to the enemy was surely not too much for the "collaborators" to do "in exchange for the safety and welfare of a nation which had been left at his mercy.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

Chapter V. Conclusion

People interpret loyalty in different ways and in different situations. The occupation of the Philippines by the Japanese tested the concept of loyalty at every level of the government and class. During the occupation, the question of loyalty sprang up everywhere; parameters were established regarding the issue of loyalty and collaboration. People who collaborated with the Japanese had to suffer severe consequences from American politicians and the returning Filipino government in exile after the war. The issue of loyalty swayed back and forth during and after the tumultuous years of the occupation.

The majority of people backed the exile government of President Quezon. In this case, it was not just loyalty but faith in the United States and to liberate the people from the Japanese. Filipinos hatred against the Japanese varied. Many strongly hated the Japanese for the punishment and atrocities they committed against their families and their way of life. Others had a respect for the efficiency of the Japanese, "but thoroughly despite their domineering superiority attitude and ruthless military methods. They have learned to bitter experience the utter selfishness of the co-prosperity program." ⁸⁶Then there were those who would do anything for

⁸⁶ Martinez, Carlos Manuel. "Filipino collaboration and resistance movement against the Japanese during World War II." *2001.* (San Diego: San Diego State University, 10 12, 2010.),57

profit who became loyal to the Japanese. Most were opportunistic politicians and greedy merchants who cooperated with the Japanese. However, during the occupation it was clear that loyalty had limited meanings. Primary to the concept of loyalty to the United States and the government-in-exile, Filipinos were expected to let the Japanese know that they would never control the Philippines. Nonetheless, leaders who were left behind forgot their oath to the Philippines and were swayed by the Japanese propaganda. The returning exile government had difficult decisions t make regarding the assumed collaboration and issue of loyalty to the Philippines. By 1942, Japan had flexed its muscles from Korea to the Asia Pacific. The attack on Pearl Harbor and the subsequent occupation of the Philippine made the world aware of the brutality Japan was capable of inflicting of any people who stood in the way of their goals. What stalled the Japanese plans was the United States strategic presence in the Asia Pacific, the Philippines in particular. The Japanese believed that the Philippines would be better off under the Co-prosperity Sphere because Asians should stand together. However, the Japanese invasion of the Philippines did not produce a friendly reception from the Filipinos. The Philippines already a few years away from US sanctioned independence had that taken away from them which caused great resentment and resistance to the Japanese when they arrived. In an effort to calm down the Philippine masses the Japanese instead generated discontent greed, resistance and treason from the Filipino people. Jorge Vargas and Jose P. Laurel lead the elite group in their collaboration with the Japanese. Vargas immediately turned a deaf ear to President Quezon and General MacArthur's orders and after a short act of showing some compliance with their orders. Laurel followed through with the Japanese because of his past relationship with the invaders and his idea of doing his duty for his country. Laurel also wanted to protect his people no matter the cost even if it meant complying with the Japanese. Nevertheless these two men were the catalysts of a domino effect for the rest of the government elites. Many lived in fear of dying if they did not fully cooperate with the Japanese. Therefore they cooperated without much hesitation. This thesis covered the some of the incriminating factors that influenced the wartime behaviors of these two men. It demonstrated how Vargas and Laurel were guilty of collaboration and treason only in respect to fulfilling the promises they made to Quezon and MacArthur. Partly owing to different interpretations of collaboration, scholars were divided over the actions of Vargas and Laurel, but after reading both sides and consulting government files, this researcher thinks that these two men should have found some creative, alternative way to confront their fears of the Japanese and showed that they refused to work for them. Whatever their fears were, Just like Jose Abad Santos, they could have ignored them. Of course Abad Santos paid for it with his life, but he chose that path instead of collaborating with the Japanese. The concept of loyalty was misinterpreted during the occupation during occupation because of its vague meaning. The word loyalty had different meanings to different people in different situations. Loyalty for Abad Santos meant dying for his country. For Vargas and Laurel loyalty was based on themselves or belief in Japan for what they could for them.